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TO THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS

Submitted herewith for filing under 35 U.S.C. 111 and 37 C.F.R. 1.53 is the patent application of:

LOOR ET AL

for: **BUSINESS METHOD FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE OF SERVICES**

Enclosed are:

- ☒ Certificate of Mailing with Express Mail Mailing Label No. **EL172581492US**
☒ **ONE** sheets of drawings.
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JC542 U.S. PTO
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11/12/99

CLAIMS AS FILED

For	#Filed	#Allowed	#Extra	Rate	Fee
Total Claims	9	- 20 =	0	x \$18.00	\$0.00
Indep. Claims	3	- 3 =	0	x \$78.00	\$0.00
Multiple Dependent Claims (check if applicable) <input type="checkbox"/>					\$0.00
BASIC FEE					\$760.00
TOTAL FILING FEE					\$760.00

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09433310 11/12/99

**APPLICATION
FOR
UNITED STATES LETTERS PATENT**

APPLICANT(S) NAME: R. GLOOR ET AL

TITLE: BUSINESS METHOD FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE OF SERVICES

DOCKET NO. EN999079

INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS MACHINES CORPORATION

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BUSINESS METHOD FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE OF SERVICES

TECHNICAL FIELD

5 The invention relates to business methods for assuring quality services and particularly to delivering information technology services which have a high quality assurance.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

10 Providing information technology services has become an important part of business activity. Businesses recognize that having high quality information technology services are essential to operating their businesses in a competitive fashion. Various service providing companies compete with each other in
15 formulating bidding for and delivering these services to their own and other companies. It is therefore also essential that these formulating, bidding for, and delivering aspects of the information technology service be carried out with high quality
20 if a service providing company is to be successful in this competitive area.

25 While quality techniques have been applied in the operation of various businesses, including primarily hardware manufacture, little attention has been directed to quality processes in the service business area. Keane, in U.S. Patent 5,737,581 describes a product flow monitoring system including quality assurance measures. Turnbull, in U.S. Patent 5,208,765 describes a method
30 and structure of a product development monitoring system in which

5 the process is divided into stages including quality assurance.
Stapleton, in U.S. Patent 5,537,483 describes a quality assurance
feature of an image processing system. Ertel in U.S. Patent
10 5,307,262 describes a data quality review method and system in
the health care environment. Tucker et al. in U.S. Patent
5,432,218 describe determining quality levels for fabrication and
assembly designs of a manufactured product. Motai et al. in U.S.
Patent 5,644,493 describe forming a quality control instruction
table on the basis of a manufacturing drawing of the product.
Miyakawa et al. in U.S. Patent 5,717,598 describe a
15 manufacturability evaluation method to be employed while
designing an article.

20 Unfortunately, none of the above quality systems apply to
assuring the quality of solutions in the service industry or more
particularly in the information technology service industry.

25 Information technology services include but are not limited
to, selecting and providing workstation hardware, software
operating systems and applications, server hardware and software,
network and communication hardware and software, installation and
maintenance of the above hardware and software, help desk
operation, user training and education, on site and remote
support, providing personnel and management to perform the above
tasks. The services may also include developing, installing and
30 maintaining a custom application for a customer.

35 In accordance with the teachings of the present invention,
there is defined a new method of assuring the quality of a
services solution.

5 It is believed that such a method would constitute a
significant advancement in the art.

OBJECTS AND SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

10 It is therefore a principal object of the present invention
to enhance the service solution providing art by providing a
quality assurance method for formulating, proposing, and
delivering such services in a high quality manner.

15 It is another object to provide such a method wherein the
profit objectives of the providing business are met.

20 It is yet another object to provide such a method wherein
the customer need is satisfied.

25 These and other objects are attained in accordance with one
embodiment of the invention wherein there is provided a method
for a services solution, comprising the steps of, defining a
first solution by a provider having a business objective, for a
customer having a need, performing a first assurance review of
the first solution to determine whether the first solution is
technically viable, deliverable, and includes technical risk
identification, assessment, and containment plans, performing a
30 second assurance review of the first solution to determine
whether the first solution includes complete schedules, a
complete cost and profit case, and the first solution satisfies
both the provider business objectives and the customer need,
defining a second solution by the provider, by correcting any
35 deficiencies identified in the first or second assurance reviews,
thereafter, performing a first readiness review of the second

5 solution to identify new issues or risks which arose during the
obtaining customer commitment step, determine whether delivery
plans are established, and establish baselines for performance
and the profit case, periodically performing a project management
review to verify the second solution is being managed as defined,
10 meeting the profit case, and meeting the customer need, and
thereafter, performing a deliverable readiness review to verify
that the second solution has been delivered to the customer and
that the second solution satisfies the customer need.

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BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING

The FIGURE shows a flowchart of a method of assuring quality
in accordance with the present invention.

BEST MODE FOR CARRYING OUT THE INVENTION

For a better understanding of the present invention,
together with other and further objects, advantages and
capabilities thereof, reference is made to the following
disclosure and the appended claims in connection with the
above-described drawing.

5 In the FIGURE there is shown a flowchart describing the
steps of a preferred embodiment of the present invention.
Although the steps are shown in serial fashion for ease of
explanation, there is no sequential limitation implied other than
indicated in the appended claims. In addition some steps may be
10 optional.

In step 12 a first solution for a customer need is defined
by a provider business having a business objective. The customer
need is preferably a need for information technology services by
15 a company as explained above. The first solution defines the
services, hardware, and software which will be provided to
satisfy the customer need. The business objective includes a
profit target but may also include overall revenue, hardware and
software sales, personnel utilization, market share, and new
20 business.

In step 14 a first assurance review of the first solution is
performed. This review and all subsequent reviews is defined for
the purpose of this specification to mean conducting a meeting to
25 inspect, view, examine, or the like, written materials. The
meeting may be held in person at a scheduled time and place but
may also be held by teleconference, videoconference, or via a
computer network or internet connection of the participants.
Written materials may include text, graphs, figures, pictures, or
30 video whether in hardcopy printed form or stored in computer
readable form or in a format suitable for presentation. This
first assurance review determines whether the first solution is
technically viable. Technical experts may be called upon to
evaluate the first solution in light of the needs of the customer

5 and take positions on the technical feasibility and soundness of
the solution. This review also determines deliverability which
is taken to mean the ability to deliver the first solution on the
planned schedule using the financial and personnel resources
identified in the first solution. This review also includes a
10 technical risk identification with appropriate assessment and
containment plans. Technical experts may also be used in this
part of step 14.

15 In step 16 a second assurance review of the first solution
is performed. This second assurance review has a business
emphasis in contrast to the first review just described which has
a technical emphasis. During this second assurance review, it is
determined whether the first solution includes complete and
acceptable schedules and definition of work scope, and a
20 complete and acceptable cost and profit case including
contingencies and business risk. Whether the first solution
satisfies both the provider business objectives and the customer
need is also determined in the second assurance review of step
16.

25 In step 18 a second solution is defined by the provider.
Any deficiencies in the first solution identified in steps 14 and
16 are corrected in this second solution. Correction may involve
revisions to the scope or schedules for services as specified in
30 the first solution of step 12.

In step 20, which is optional, a third assurance review is
performed. The purpose of this review is to determine whether
the second solution defined in step 18 properly corrects the

5 deficiencies identified in steps 14 and 16. Depending on the
number or seriousness of these deficiencies this review can be as
extensive as the first and second reviews or it can be brief or
completely eliminated if for example only minor deficiencies were
identified.

10
In step 22 a commitment is obtained from the customer to the
second solution. This commitment may take the form of a signed
contract to purchase the services defined in the second solution.
It may also be a statement of intent, letter of authorization, or
15 other type of business commitment satisfactory to the provider.

20
In step 24 a first readiness review of the second solution
is performed to identify new issues or risks which were not part
of the second solution but which arose thereafter, for example
during step 22 of obtaining customer commitment. It is also
determined whether delivery plans are established. Delivery
plans include plans for project management, schedules, and
available resources. Delivery plans may also include plans for
communication, organization, tracking, change control, and
25 reporting. Baselines for performance and profit are also
established in step 24. A baseline is a measure of the expected
level based on the second solution plans.

30 In step 26 a project management review is performed
periodically to verify that the second solution is being managed
as defined, that it is meeting the profit case and that it
continues to meet the customer need. The frequency of performing
this review may vary widely depending on the results of step 24
and any previously performed project management reviews.

In step 28 a deliverable readiness review of the second solution is performed to verify that the second solution has been delivered to the customer and that the second solution satisfies the customer need. This step is normally performed by experts in the subject matter of the second solution and may include inspection of project files and interviews with key supplier and customer personnel.

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While there have been shown and described what are at present considered the preferred embodiments of the invention, it will be obvious to those skilled in the art that various changes and modifications may be made therein without departing from the scope of the invention as defined by the appended claims.

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What is claimed is:

1 1. A quality assurance method for a services solution, comprising
2 the steps of:

3 defining a first solution by a provider having a business
4 objective, for a customer having a need;

5 performing a first assurance review of said first solution to
6 determine whether said first solution is technically viable,
7 deliverable, and includes technical risk identification,
8 assessment, and containment plans;

9 performing a second assurance review of said first solution to
10 determine whether said first solution includes complete
11 schedules, a complete cost and profit case, and said first
12 solution satisfies both said provider business objectives and
13 said customer need;

14 defining a second solution by said provider, by correcting any
15 deficiencies identified in said first or second assurance
16 reviews;

17 thereafter, performing a first readiness review of said second
18 solution to identify new issues or risks which arose during said
19 obtaining customer commitment step, determine whether delivery
20 plans are established, and establish baselines for performance
21 and said profit case;

periodically performing a project management review to verify said second solution is being managed as defined, meeting said profit case, and meeting said customer need; and

thereafter, performing a deliverable readiness review to verify that said second solution has been delivered to said customer and that said second solution satisfies said customer need.

2. The method as set forth in claim 1, further comprising the step of performing a third assurance review of said second solution to determine whether said deficiencies have been satisfactorily corrected.

3. The method as set forth in claim 1, further comprising the step of obtaining customer commitment to said second solution.

4. The method as set forth in claim 1, wherein said first readiness review is performed to determine whether communication, organization, tracking, change control, quality management, and reporting delivery plans are established.

5. A method of managing a quality assurance service solution, comprising the steps of:

a first solution defining by a provider having a business objective, for a customer having a need;

performing a first assurance review of said first solution to determine whether said first solution is technically viable, deliverable, and includes technical risk identification, assessment, and containment plans;

9 performing a second assurance review of said first solution to
10 determine whether said first solution includes complete and
11 reasonable schedules, a complete cost and profit case with
12 contingencies identified, and said first solution satisfies both
13 said provider business objectives and said customer need;

14 defining a second solution by said provider, by correcting any
15 deficiencies identified in said first or second assurance
16 reviews;

17 thereafter performing a third assurance review of said second
18 solution to determine whether said deficiencies have been
19 satisfactorily corrected;

20 obtaining customer commitment to said second solution;

21 thereafter, performing a first readiness review of said second
22 solution to identify new issues or risks which arose during said
23 obtaining customer commitment step, determine whether delivery
24 plans are established, and establish baselines for performance
25 and said profit;

26 periodically performing a project management review to verify
27 said second solution is being managed as defined, meeting said
28 profit case, and meeting said customer need; and

29 thereafter, performing a deliverable readiness review to verify
30 that said second solution has been delivered to said customer and
31 that said second solution satisfies said customer need.

1 6. The method as set forth in claim 5, wherein said first
2 readiness review is performed to determine whether communication,
3 organization, tracking, change control, quality management, and
4 reporting delivery plans are established.

1 7. A method of bringing about a service solution for a customer
2 having a need by a provider having a business objective, said
3 method comprising the steps of:

4 performing a first assurance review of said first solution to
5 determine whether said first solution is technically viable,
6 deliverable, and includes technical risk identification,
7 assessment, and containment plans;

8 performing a second assurance review of said first solution to
9 determine whether said first solution includes complete and
10 reasonable schedules, a complete cost and profit case with
11 contingencies identified, and said first solution satisfies both
12 said provider business objectives and said customer need;

13 defining a second solution by said provider, by correcting any
14 deficiencies identified in said first or second assurance
15 reviews;

16 thereafter, performing a first readiness review of said second
17 solution to identify new issues or risks which arose during said
18 obtaining customer commitment step, determine whether
19 communication, organization, tracking, change control, quality
20 management and reporting plans are established, and establish
21 baselines for performance and said profit;

22 periodically performing a project management review to verify
23 said second solution is being managed as defined, meeting said
24 profit case, and meeting said customer need; and

25 thereafter, performing a deliverable readiness review to verify
26 that said second solution has been delivered to said customer and
27 that said second solution satisfies said customer need.

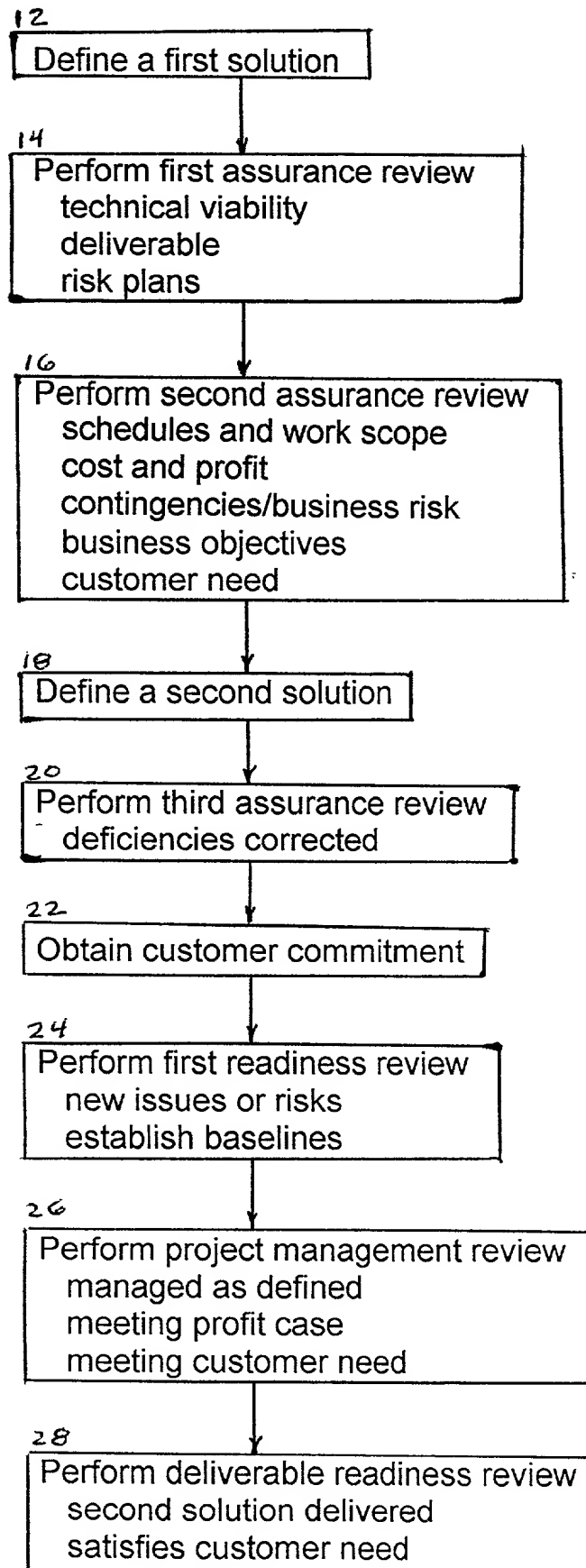
1 8. The method as set forth in claim 7, further comprising the
2 step of performing a third assurance review of said second
3 solution to determine whether said deficiencies have been
4 satisfactorily corrected.

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ABSTRACT

BUSINESS METHOD FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE OF SERVICES

5 The quality of information technology services provided by
an organization to a customer is assured. Assurance reviews of a
first solution are performed and a second solution is defined to
correct deficiencies. A third assurance review is performed.
Customer commitment to the second solution is obtained. A
10 readiness review, a project management review, and a deliverable
readiness review are performed assuring customer need
satisfaction.



Docket No.
EN999079

Declaration and Power of Attorney For Patent Application

English Language Declaration

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name,

I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled

BUSINESS METHOD FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE OF SERVICES

the specification of which

(check one)

☒ is attached hereto.

☐ was filed on _____ as United States Application No. or PCT International Application Number _____ and was amended on _____

(if applicable)

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment referred to above.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose to the United States Patent and Trademark Office all information known to me to be material to patentability as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 1.56.

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under Title 35, United States Code, Section 119(a)-(d) or Section 365(b) of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate, or Section 365(a) of any PCT International application which designated at least one country other than the United States, listed below and have also identified below, by checking the box, any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate or PCT International application having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed.

Prior Foreign Application(s)

Priority Not Claimed

NONE

(Number)

(Country)

(Day/Month/Year Filed)

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(Number)

(Country)

(Day/Month/Year Filed)

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(Number)

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(Day/Month/Year Filed)

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I hereby claim the benefit under 35 U.S.C. Section 119(e) of any United States provisional application(s) listed below:

NONE

(Application Serial No.)

(Filing Date)

(Application Serial No.)

(Filing Date)

(Application Serial No.)

(Filing Date)

I hereby claim the benefit under 35 U. S. C. Section 120 of any United States application(s), or Section 365(c) of any PCT International application designating the United States, listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States or PCT International application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. Section 112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose to the United States Patent and Trademark Office all information known to me to be material to patentability as defined in Title 37, C. F. R., Section 1.56 which became available between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT International filing date of this application:

NONE

(Application Serial No.)

(Filing Date)

(Status)
(patented, pending, abandoned)

(Application Serial No.)

(Filing Date)

(Status)
(patented, pending, abandoned)

(Application Serial No.)

(Filing Date)

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(patented, pending, abandoned)

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

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Sixth inventor's signature	Date
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